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Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 12667 01 OF 02 242047Z

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15

SS-20 NSC-07 SP-03 DRC-01 /120 W
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R 242029Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9430
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 12667

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PLAB, FR
SUBJECT: TRADE UNION REACTION TO GISCARD'S ELECTION

REF: PARIS 12016

1. SUMMARY: INITIAL CGT-CFDT REACTION TO GISCARD'S ELECTION MILDER THAN HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED. SUBSEQUENT HARDENING OF THEIR ATTITUDE WAS DESIGNED TO SERVE TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS, I.E. TO RESTORE PRE-ELECTION UNION ROLE ON BREAD-AND-BUTTER ISSUES AND TO PROVIDE BASIS FOR CLAIMING SOME CREDIT IF GISCARD'S SOCIAL PROGRAM LIVES UP TO HIS CAMPAIGN PROMISES. WE CONTINUE TO FEEL THAT NEW PRESIDENT HOLDS INITIATIVE FOR DETERMINING CONDITIONS OF LABOR PEACE IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. INITIAL TRADE UNION REACTION TO GISCARD'S ELECTION, ESPECIALLY BY CGT AND CFDT, WAS GENERALLY MUCH MILDER THAN HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED. THEY BOTH INTERPRETED
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PAGE 02 PARIS 12667 01 OF 02 242047Z

NARROWNESS OF GISCARD'S VICTORY AS GREAT PROGRESS FOR

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

THE UNITED LEFT AND, LOOKING TO FUTURE, STATED THEIR DETERMINATION TO PRESS FOR DELIVERY ON GISCARD'S ELECTORAL PROMISES IN THE SOCIAL FIELD. CGT AND CFDT LEFT NO DOUBT ABOUT THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF THE ELECTORATE'S VERDICT AND CFDT EXPLICITLY RULED OUT ANY INTENTION ON ITS PART TO ORGANIZE A "THIRD ELECTORAL ROUND" THROUGH TRADE UNION ACTION.

3. INTERESTINGLY, FORCE OUVRIERE WAS THE ONLY UNION TO MAKE A POLITICAL COMMENT ON ELECTION RESULTS DESPITE ITS NEUTRAL ATTITUDE DURING THE CAMPAIGN. FO URGED NEW PRESIDENT TO RESTORE TO PARLIAMENT ITS POWER TO CONTROL THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND TO SEEK A DIALOGUE WITH THE OPPOSITION WHICH "IS ALMOST AS LARGE AS THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY." CFTC (CHRISTIAN) AND CGC (CADRES) EXPRESSED SATISFACTION FOR THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS OF CHOOSING THE NEW PRESIDENT, BUT THEY TOO WARNED THAT INFLATION IS CREATING DIFFICULT PROBLEMS FOR THEIR MEMBERS.

4. IN UNEXPECTED TURNABOUT ON MAY 22, THE CGT HARDENED SOMEWHAT ITS POSITION THROUGH AN ARTICLE IN L'HUMANITE BY GEORGES SEGUY, CGT SECRETARY GENERAL. MESSAGE OF THE ARTICLE IS THAT CGT WILL NOT WAIT UNTIL THE FALL TO PRESS ITS DEMANDS AND THAT NEW PRESIDENT CANNOT COUNT ON A TRADE UNION TRUCE IN WEEKS AHEAD. IN ADDITION, CGT AND CFDT LEADERS MET ON MAY 21 AND IN A JOINT STATEMENT CALLED UPON WORKERS "TO BE READY TO ACT IN THE LARGEST POSSIBLE UNITY" AND TO PREPARE THEIR LISTS OF DEMANDS FOR PRESENTATION TO THEIR EMPLOYERS. CGT-CFDT LEADERS AGREED TO MEET AGAIN NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS IN MORE DETAIL THEIR STRATEGY.

5. WHILE THE FOREGOING CGT-CFDT MOVES WERE SEIZED BY THE CASSANDRAS OF THE PRESS TO PREDICT MAJOR LABOR UNREST FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, WE FEEL THAT THERE ARE SUFFICIENT TACTICAL REASONS TO EXPLAIN THE MILITANT,ALBEIT VERY CAUTIOUS STANCE, TAKEN BY THESE TWO RADICAL UNIONS AND TO MAINTAIN REFTEL ASSESSMENT WHICH PREDICATED SOCIAL PEACE ON NEW PRESIDENT'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INITIATIVES AND PROGRAM.

A. AFTER A SIX-WEEK SUSPENSION OF ANY TRADE UNION ACTIVITY TO ENHANCE THE LEFT'S ELECTORAL CHANCES, CGT AND CFDT FEEL COMPELLED TO ASSERT THEIR ROLE AND LEADERSHIP WITH THE RANK AND FILE BEFORE A "DEMOBILIZATION" PROCESS SETS IN AND MEMBERSHIP BEGINS TO DRIFT AWAY FROM UNIONS. IN FACT, FEAR OF SUCH

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

DEMOBILIZATION OF PS MILITANTS IS SEEN AS BEING BEHIND MITTERRAND'S CALL FOR A "CONTINUING STRUGGLE WITHOUT TRUCE OR PAUSE."

B. THE CGT AND CFDT INVOLVEMENT IN THE POLITICS OF THE ELECTION WAS SO DEEP AS TO CONDEMN THEM TO A SUBSERVIENT ROLE TO THAT OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES OF

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PAGE 01 PARIS 12667 02 OF 02 242044Z

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LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 12667

THE LEFT. THEREFORE, THE RESORT TO A MILITANT STANCE ON BREAD-AND-BUTTER ISSUES IS NECESSARY TO FACILITATE THEIR RETURN TO PURELY TRADE UNION ACTIVITIES.

C. ALTHOUGH THE LEFTIST RHETORIC KEEPS PORTRAYING GISCARD AS PRISONER OF THE RIGHT AND THEREFORE INHERENTLY INCAPABLE OF INITIATING A BROAD SOCIAL PROGRAM, CGT AND CFDT LEADERS CANNOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF MAJOR SURPRISES IN GISCARD'S

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PROGRAM. THEIR MILITANT STANCE, THEREFORE, IS NEEDED IN ORDER TO PORTRAY AN EVENTUAL PRESIDENTIAL PROGRAM BASED ON THE ELECTORAL PROMISES AS BEING THE RESULT OF CGT-CFDT THREATS OF ACTION.

6. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE IN THIS CONNECTION THAT THE CNPF (EMPLOYERS' NATIONAL ASSOCIATION) ISSUED A STATEMENT ON MAY 22 CALLING FOR A "REALISTIC AND VIGOROUS" SOCIAL PROGRAM. A CNPF SENIOR OFFICIAL, WHO
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PAGE 02 PARIS 12667 02 OF 02 242044Z

AGREED WITH THE FOREGOING INTERPRETATION OF CGT-CFDT TACTICS, ALL BUT ADMITTED TO LABATT THAT THE CNPF CALL WAS ALSO INSPIRED BY ANTICIPATION THAT GISCARD WILL PROVIDE EVERY BIT OF THE SURPRISE HE PROMISED IN HIS CAMPAIGN WHEN HE SPOKE OF HIS SOCIAL PROGRAM. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT CNPF TOO WANTED TO BE ABLE TO CLAIM A PIECE OF THE CREDIT FOR GISCARD'S PROGRAM.

7. COMMENT: CNPF, UNION LEADERS AND RANK-AND-FILE, WILL NOT HAVE LONG TO WAIT BEFORE THEY KNOW WHAT THE NEW PRESIDENT HAS IN MIND IN VIEW OF THE SPEED WITH WHICH HE APPARENTLY INTENDS TO BEGIN GOVERNING FRANCE.
STONE

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